



A Buyer's Guide to Homer, Alaska

STRAIGHTFORWARD GUIDANCE FOR A UNIQUE MARKET

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Before all Else: Get Pre-Qualified With a Lender Before You Shop for a Home

The first step in buying a home in Homer, Alaska is obtaining a solid pre-qualification (or preferably a pre-approval) from a lender who can actually close properties in this market. A pre-qualification helps you understand both how much a lender is willing to finance and how much you're comfortable spending on a home (those are often two very different numbers).

Homer and the surrounding Kenai Peninsula present challenges that aren't common in urban or Lower 48 transactions: rural properties, private wells and septic systems, access issues, and seasonal considerations. Not every lender is equipped to handle these details efficiently.

Over time, I've worked closely with lenders—both local and national—who regularly finance homes in this area. That experience matters once you're under contract. Knowing how a lender underwrites rural properties, how they communicate during appraisals and title review, and how they handle surprises allows me to anticipate issues early and help keep transactions on track.

Interest rates matter, but they're only part of the equation. Responsiveness, Alaska-specific underwriting experience, and a consistent track record of closing homes in the Homer area are just as important—especially when timelines tighten or unexpected issues arise.

A quick clarification on referrals: federal law under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA) prohibits real estate brokers from receiving referral fees or kickbacks from lenders. Any lender recommendations I provide are based solely on professional experience and performance.

If you'd like a curated list of lenders—both local and non-local—who regularly and successfully close transactions in the Homer area, reach out. It's a practical starting point to help you compare options and choose a lender who fits your financial goals and communication style.

Think About the Type of Property you'll be Buying

Before touring homes in Homer, Alaska, it's important to understand what type of property you're evaluating. This isn't about style—it's about how the property functions day to day.

Many homes in Homer and the surrounding Kenai Peninsula are not connected to city water or sewer. Some rely on private wells or delivered water, some have septic systems or bicycle systems. Others are accessed by private or unmaintained roads, or are subject to watershed restrictions that affect how the land can be used.

Two homes with the same price can be serviced in entirely different ways. Those differences can impact lender requirements, the structure of your offer, annual maintenance costs, and long-term livability; factors that don't always show up clearly in online listings.

Before you write an offer, I'll help you evaluate:

- How the property is serviced (water source, septic, power, and heating system)
- Whether legal, year-round access is in place and if the roads are maintained and by whom
- Any zoning, land-use, wetland, or watershed restrictions
- Red flags that could affect financing, insurance, or future use

Understanding these fundamentals early is essential when buying property here at the end of the road. It allows you to make informed decisions and avoid surprises once you're under contract.

A Note about Homer Pricing

Homer is not a high-volume, high-turnover real estate market. Inventory is often limited, pricing can be uneven, and comparable sales are often imperfect. Homes don't always sell quickly—but when the right buyer shows up, they sell decisively.

I often help buyers recalibrate expectations when they enter this market. In Homer, timing, property type, seasonality, and buyer pool matter more than days on market alone. Sometimes clients coming from urban areas assume prices will correct quickly, or that a home sitting on the market is automatically overpriced. That's not always the case.

Understanding the local market rhythm of what tends to sell, when it sells, and why, helps buyers write realistic offers and avoid missing good opportunities while waiting for a deal that may never come.

Plan for Due Diligence

Every home purchase includes a due diligence, or inspection period. In Homer, this step is especially important. Many properties are older, owner-built, or have been modified over time, and inspections often reveal far more than a simple pass-or-fail list.

I strongly encourage you to attend your home inspections and take notes. A good inspection doesn't just identify deficiencies—it provides a practical maintenance punch list and teaches you how the home actually operates. This is often your best opportunity to understand systems, priorities, and long-term care of the property.

Beyond a standard home inspection, buyers in Homer often need to evaluate septic system condition and capacity, well flow, water quality, or water delivery logistics, heating systems and energy considerations as well as legal access, easements, and road maintenance.

These property inspections aren't about looking for reasons to walk away. They're about using due diligence strategically—to confirm the property functions as expected and to address issues clearly and professionally before closing.

Every Purchase is Also a Future Sale

If you're working with me to buy a home, we are going to talk about resale and we're going to talk about it early. I often tell buyer clients that I can negotiate them into almost anything; the key is being able to get them back out.

Even if you plan to stay long-term, resale matters. In Homer, future buyers will scrutinize the same fundamentals you should be evaluating now: overall condition, legal access, utilities, land use, and how the property actually functions.

Thinking about resale from the beginning leads to better decisions, stronger negotiating positions, and far fewer regrets later.

If resale matters to you—even down the road—I can help you assess whether a property will hold up under future scrutiny. Reach out if you want to approach your purchase with that perspective from the start.

About Me

I'm an Associate Broker with Story Real Estate, working with buyers and sellers across Homer and the Kenai Peninsula. My work is centered on clear communication and thoughtful strategy, helping clients make well-reasoned decisions in a market that's anything but generic.

I'm known for a straightforward, organized approach to the buying process and for guiding clients from first conversations through closing with perspective and care. If you value clarity and a steady hand, I'm happy to talk through your plans and see whether working together is a good fit.

If you're considering a purchase and want a clear, grounded conversation about next steps, feel free to reach out.

